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UNCLAS TAIPEI 004774

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR INR/R/MR, EAP/TC, EAP/PA, EAP/PD - ERIC
BARBORIAK
DEPARTMENT PASS AIT/WASHINGTON

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: TAIWAN'S CROSS-STRAIT POLICY

1. Summary: Major Chinese-language Taiwan dailies continued to give their full attention December 1 to covering the campaigns and mud-slinging for Saturday's 3-in-1 elections. All newspapers reported in their front or second pages President Chen Shui-bian's campaign remarks in I-lan city Wednesday that the government will tighten its cross-strait policy in the event of a sweeping victory by the opposition pan-Blue camp.

2. Editorials of the pro-independence "Liberty Times" and centrist "China Times" both commented on President Chen's remarks on the government's cross-strait policy. The "Liberty Times" editorial compared Chen's remarks with the Executive Yuan's announcement a few days ago that it would loosen the government's cross-strait policy, saying that the DPP administration needs to have a coherent and more restrictive cross-strait policy. The "China Times" editorial, however, criticized the DPP administration as seeing nothing but elections, adding that Chen's decision will only isolate Taiwan and make it even more marginalized in the region. End summary.

A) "DPP Will Lose More Votes If It Unduly Loosens Its Cross-Strait Policy"

The pro-independence "Liberty Times" [circulation: 600,000] editorialized (12/1):

". [T]he fact that the Presidential Office and the Executive Yuan each spoke of a different version of the government's cross-strait policy fully reflected the DPP's confusion and anxiety over the outcomes of the [3-in-1] elections. Even though the final results of the elections will not unveil until [the end of] the polling day, the various opinion surveys conducted recently by the private sector showed that it is a generally acknowledged fact that the DPP is in a very unfavorable position in terms of election campaigns. .

"Over the past five years since DPP came into power, what people have criticized most is Taiwan's loss of its economic vitality, which is a result of the government's opening of its cross-strait policy. In other words, the opening up of Taiwan's cross-strait economic and trade policy is the 'cause' rather than the 'result' of Taiwan's economic downfall following the transition of political parties [five years ago]. As a result, if Taiwan wants to restore its economic edge, the only way it can do is to hold on to its prior 'no haste, be patient' policy because the 'effective opening' policy is nothing but a dead end. .

"This newspaper has more than once emphasized the shortcomings of an open cross-strait economic policy and the major impact of such a policy on Taiwan's economy and sovereignty awareness. . When voters choose to cast their votes for a pro-Taiwan nativism political party, it means they support the DPP for its sticking to the pro-Taiwan ideals and values. The DPP must never back out from its cross-strait policy, nor should it regard Taiwan as the stakes of an election gamble. ."

B) "[The Government] Wants to 'Tighten' Cross-Strait Relations after the Elections?"

The centrist, pro-status quo "China Times" [circulation: 400,000] commented in an editorial (12/1):

"Yes, Taiwan sees nothing but the elections at this moment; it cares only if somebody will become a lame duck and if someone will step down after the elections, as if nothing else in the whole world matters more than these. . While Taiwan is fighting like Kilkenny cats during the election campaigns, a large-scale event, the East Asian summit, is about to be held. Likewise, the longest bridge in the whole Asia and the biggest deep-water harbor are about to be inaugurated. When all the East Asian nations are feeling the anxiety about the whole new changes in the competitive domain of influence [in the region], Taiwan alone is utterly unaware of the situation going on in the outside world and the accelerating marginalization of its own, tangible or intangible. .

". If President Chen insists on tightening the cross-strait

policy in the wake of the [3-in-1] elections, we really have nothing to say. While East Asia is undergoing a stage of the biggest changes of the century, Taiwan chooses to lock itself up and isolate itself, absolutely unaware of itself being marginalized. What it is left now is nothing but those eloquent campaigning rhetoric on the trucks!"

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